REMARKS

Claims 1-8 have been amended and are currently pending.

Priority

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgment of the claim for priority and receipt of the priority document.

35 U.S.C. §103

The claims are rejected as being unpatentable over Fawcett, U.S. Patent No. 6,073,214 (claims 4-7) in view of Sekiya et al. (Sekiya), U.S. Patent No. 6,484,128 (claims 1 and 2) and further in view of Nashed, U.S. Patent No. 6,654,749 (claim 3). The rejection of claim 8 is based on the rejection of claims 1 and 3, but the rejections of these claims are different. Accordingly, the basis of the rejection of claim 8 is not clearly stated. Applicants request clarification of the rejection of claim 8; and reconsideration of the rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and for the following reasons.

According to the present invention, a user's computer is provided with a unique identification information (product ID)

that is stored in non-volatile memory, such as a ROM on the

motherboard of the computer. The user's computer system may

be a computer Built To Order (BTO) in which the computer

system is manufactured and sold to the user based upon

specifications provided by the user, such as a specified CPU,

memory, hard disk, operating system, etc.

As shown in Fig. 1, the user's computer system (client 1)

is connected to a server (server 2) over a network such as the

Internet. The server system may be operated by a vendor and

have databases including a client database of the users, an

order database managing user IDs and product IDs and the

correspondence between these, a system configuration database

and a hardware/software management database. For every

product ID, the system configuration database manages the

hardware elements constituting the computer system that

corresponds to the product ID. The software elements required

for the hardware elements are stored in the H/S management

database which manages them by file name, as shown in Fig. 3.

These software elements include, for example, the operating

system of the computer system, the various device drivers and

the various application software of the computer system.

The system configuration information of a user's computer system can be obtained from the inputted product ID because the information is stored in the database of the server. The system configuration information is useful when a problem occurs in one of the software elements, such as the operating system or a device driver, of a user's computer system and recovery of the constituent element(s) of the user's computer system is necessary. For example, the user's computer system can execute recovery software from a boot floppy disk or CD, whereupon the user's computer system sends the product ID to the server system and subsequently downloads the software elements from the server system that are determined to be necessary from the system configuration information stored in the database of the server. Then, installation processing of the downloaded software is executed on the user's computer system, as shown in Fig. 5.

As a result, the computer system is able to automatically execute recovery software and install required software elements that are downloaded from the server system. Specifically, the server system makes a download list which the user (client system 1) should require on the basis of the

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specified software elements, and sends the download list to the client system 1. See step 603 of the flow charts of Fig. 6. In this way, the initial configuration of the computer system can be recovered based on the product ID that is stored by the server system once communication is established between the user's computer system and the server system.

The server system is also able to recognize the hardware elements that the user has added after purchase and delivery of the computer system by implementing self-diagnostic software and updating the stored system configuration software for that computer. Accordingly, the server system can manage the latest system configuration information sent from the client system. It is also possible to charge the user fees corresponding to the software that is sent and to manage the respective computer systems concerning which software has been sent to which computer system. Accordingly, the invention is applicable to recovering the initial configuration of a computer system and also to updating versions of the software in accordance with software updates and additional hardware that is added to a user's computer system.

In Fawcett, when a user accesses a remote update service, an automatic inventory of the computer software on the user's computer is conducted. There is no information comparable to the system configuration information stored in the update service center of Fawcett, as there is in the system configuration information database of the server of the present invention. In Fawcett, the inventory of the user's computer is required first and then the available computer software is downloaded from the remote update service and installed on the user's computer. Therefore, Fawcett merely enables users to purchase and download available computer software in a secure transaction for safeguarding the payment of the software.

In Fawcett, the user is unable to download needed software from the server if the user's computer is in need of recovery due to various difficulties. Also, even if there is no trouble with the user's computer, the update service center of Fawcett must take inventory of the user's computer before making the downloads available. In the present invention, a product ID is stored in the server system so that the inventory conducted by the remote update service in Fawcett is

not necessary. Further, such an inventory of the user's

computer system would not be possible in Fawcett if the user's

computer system was operating in recovery execution.

The Examiner relies upon Sekiya for disclosing the

storing of information relating to elements of a computer

system and the database. Sekiya relates to detecting and

repairing or replacing a module of a network element used in

communications when there is a failure of the module. In

particular, the Sekiya system improves upon the prior art in

which a management system 1 permits the system administrator

to readily find the target system and basic module in question

and a failure record manager 1c displays on the screen of a

monitor console 1g the information showing the target system

that holds the failed basic module (Fig. 21). After finding

the failed module, the administrator can replace the module if

the failure is unrecoverable. The improvement disclosed by

Sekiya relates to providing a data processing system that

checks the compatibility among basic modules used to avoid

problems that could be caused by installation of inappropriate

modules when the failed module is replaced. Accordingly,

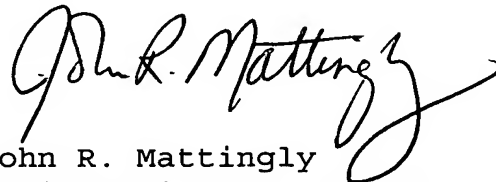Sekiya fails to disclose that which is necessary to teach one

having ordinary skill in the art of the modification to

Fawcett that would be required to render the invention as

claimed obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Therefore, the

rejection of claims 1, 2 and 4-7 should be withdrawn.

    With respect to the rejection of claim 3, Nashed is

relied upon for disclosing multiple databases for storing

configuration information. However, the information stored in

the databases of the Nashed reference is not comparable to

that of the information stored in the databases of the servers

in the present invention. Therefore, the combination of

Fawcett, Sekiya and Nashed does not render claim 3

unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and the rejection should be

withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants contend that the above-identified application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and reexamination is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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